

MECHANICAL MEMORIES MAGAZINE

ISSUE 80

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*The only UK magazine dedicated to
Vintage coin-operated amusement machines*

Mechanical Memories Magazine

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Editorial

Hello again, and welcome to the November magazine. As usual at this time of year, there haven't been enough hours in the days; organising the auction seems to get more time-consuming each year.....but perhaps I'm just getting old. If all goes to plan, I should be getting the magazines and auction catalogues back from the printers at about the same time, so if you've already ordered a catalogue, it will hopefully be included with your magazine. If you haven't ordered one – do it now! Anyway, more about the auction further on in the mag. Suffice to say, I think once again we have a great day in store for you!

Now, it must be several months since my last plea for articles for the magazine, but once again I am running out of material, so please do try to contribute something.

Well, it's now gone 2.00 in the morning, so I shall keep this brief and go to bed! I look forward to seeing you all at the Coventry auction.

All the best

Jerry

Front Cover picture: A rare Myers Tele-Test, Lot 233 in the Coventry Auction

Dreamland

MARGATE

Save Dreamland Update November 2013

HISTORIC RIDES RESTORATION HAS BEGUN!

I am pleased to share the good news that work has now started on one of the rides that will be opening at Dreamland in 2015: the Hurricane Jets. This ride is almost identical to the Jets ride that operated in Dreamland from 1956/8, and survived until the 1970s. The ride has been transported to ride restorer David Littleboy's new workshop near Wakefield, and has already been inspected by ride expert Ken Rundle.

The delight of this 1950s ride is that the rider can control the elevation of the cars by the operation of a joystick. Built by the Lang Wheels Company of Middlesex, these popular rides could be found in many amusement parks, including Dreamland, although the one we have acquired has spent its life on the travelling fairs.

This is the first of what we hope will be further announcements on ride acquisitions over the next few weeks as we firm up our line-up. Our rides come from a variety of sources, including Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Pleasureland Southport and Dreamland Margate, and will represent different eras in the history of Dreamland and UK amusement parks.

One very positive piece of ride-related news is that our initial inspection of the rides stored on Dreamland is now complete and, despite our worry that the previous owners had removed and scrapped a number of our rides, much more survives than we expected, and most of the rides earmarked for Phase 1 are still on-site.

I will report further acquisitions and progress with restoration in future issues of Mechanical Memories as we work hard to complete the park ready for Easter 2015 opening.

OPENING THE GATES TO DREAMLAND

Following the long and drawn out legal challenge, which saw the successful conclusion of Thanet District Council's Compulsory Purchase Order of the Dreamland site, we are delighted to announce that at mid-day on the 16th November 2013, the gates to the Dreamland Amusement Park site will be opened to the public for the first time since the park closed in 2006.

This is an opportunity for the community to take back their park and be a part of this extraordinary regeneration project.

For many generations Dreamland thrilled and delighted visitors to Margate and sustained her community. This community campaigned hard for a number of years to save the park from redevelopment and it will be this community spirit and support that will again help reinstate Dreamland as a world-class visitor attraction.

Come one, come all and meet us in Dreamland to find out, first hand, about the plans for the new park, hear the latest news and up-dates and find out how you can play an important part in rejuvenating Dreamland for future generations to enjoy.

FUNDRAISING ART AUCTION

The Dreamland Trust is pleased to announce Fontaine Decorative's forthcoming Glitzy Fundraising Art Auction in Dreamland's 1934 Grade II* listed disused cinema building. The event takes place on Saturday 16th November 2013 from 6pm until 9pm followed by A Grand Gatsby Cabaret Celebration at the opening of Morgan's Vintage Dance Hall <http://www.morgansmargate.co.uk>.

The evening begins with champagne, canapés and music followed by a warm welcome from the award-winning, multi-disciplinary designer for Dreamland, Wayne Hemingway MBE. There will be a Grand Prize Draw on the night with no prize under the value of £150!

After the auction and prize draw, guests are invited to join us at Morgan's Vintage Dance Hall, to celebrate the opening of Margate's only dedicated dance hall – my dance card is ready! Transport between Dreamland and Morgan's courtesy of the 1951 Bluebird Coach. The whole evening promises to be a night of surprises and fun. Dress Code: definitely glam!

A limited number of advance tickets at £25 each are available at Eventbrite <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/event/8991579055> (£2.15 online booking fee) or direct from Fontaine Decorative at <http://www.fontainedecorative.com> Telephone 01843 220974 or Mobile 07855 360475.

Nick Laister

Nick Laister (Chairman, The Dreamland Trust)

Jan Leandro (Heritage and Engagement Officer, The Dreamland Trust)

www.dreamlandmargate.com
www.savedreamland.co.uk

Smoke and Mirrors: The Haunted House of Alton Towers

by Michael P Eley

When Alton Towers invested millions of pounds in the ground-breaking Haunted House, a new era of dark rides was born. The spectacular attraction amazed and spellbound theme park enthusiasts and dark ride fans for many years, with its breathtaking illusions and state-of-the-art technology. The original concept was retired in 2002 to make way for the interactive zombie blaster, Duel. However, the haunted mansion left riders who braved the terrifying Poltergeist Room and were scared witless by the Grand Hallway's grinning demon.

Michael P. Eley is one of those riders. Through the pages of this book, he'll guide you back into the darkness, offering behind-the-scenes insights into the making of creator John Wardley's 'laff in the dark' attraction, as well as serving up a brief history of dark rides and haunted houses.

ISBN Number: 9781490417080

Format: Paperback

Number of Pages: 112

Publication Date: 2013

Publisher: Haunted One

RRP: £12.99

Our Price: £8.99

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Smoke & Mirrors

The Haunted House of Alton Towers



by
Michael D Eleu
with a foreword by John Wardleu

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Wonders Dropacopper

By Robert Rowland

You probably all know by now that I usually buy a slot machine that holds memories from the happiest days of my life, which were the swinging sixties. Well, Wonders Dropacopper fits the bill nicely.

Wondermatics were a company based in Tottenham that were well known for producing giant allwins such as Honest Joe, Steeplechase and big Wheel. They also made many smaller allwins such as Wonder Win, Wonders Pools and Win and Place. Dropacopper was their only non-allwin machine, dating from 1965. It is an electric payout drop-case wall machine, which measures 32" high, 20" wide and 9" in depth.

The machine has an attractive coloured playfield and a round coin entry at the top. When a penny is inserted, it drops down into any one of nine coloured columns. Five of these columns are lose, and the other four pay 3d, 6d, 9d, or 12d. The five losing columns are white, the 3d yellow, 6d orange, 9d pink and 12d red. The word 'Dropacopper' just below the coin entry is in bold yellow lettering on a dark blue background. It is a real rainbow of colours.

In order to reach one of these columns, the penny connects with what I can only describe as rubber tap washers screwed into the wooden backboard, which are strategically placed in various positions around the playfield. When I unscrewed and removed one of these rubber washers on my machine, I noticed behind where the washer had been there were three different screw holes, and this was the case underneath a few others (so someone had been messing). The slight moving by hand of these rubber washers makes a massive difference to the game play. By moving it only a small distance, it would be impossible for the 9d win to come up, it simply directed the coin into the same white lose column every single time. The same could also happen on the other winning numbers if these washers were moved.

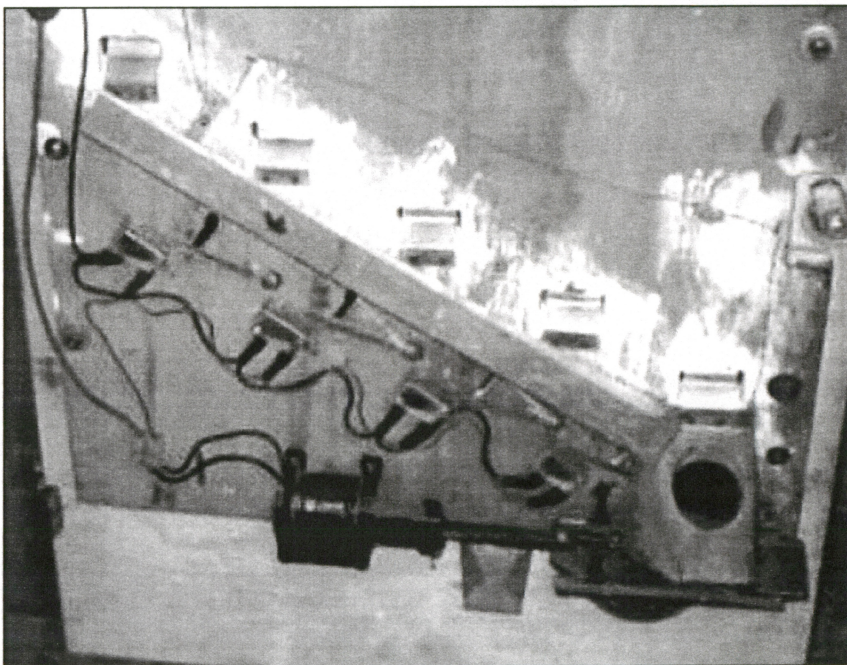
I must have had my Dropacopper front glass in and out well over thirty times, and to do this you have to loosen and take out four nuts and bolts, as well as unscrewing a further five screws before finally being able to remove the thick front glass. At this point my thrilling memories were sinking fast and I was thinking "just move it on to someone else." But I really wanted my Dropacopper working correctly, so that every win could be achieved.

After many hours of tinkering and frustration I elected to settle with it as I now had it. Even now, my machine is over-generous and it empties on most occasions that someone plays it. The payout tube on the inside of the machine only holds thirty-two pennies, which is not a lot when you start to get a run of 9d wins. Also, the losing coins don't always drop into the payout tube, as they drop down at great speed.

This then results in my Dropacopper going empty on numerous occasions. To date, no one who has played on my machine has finished up on the losing side; now that just did not happen back in the 1960s! Anyway, it's something a bit different so I've decided to keep it after all. I've posted a video on Youtube – search *Wonders Dropacopper 1960s slot machine* and enjoy my machine in a very generous mode.

Finally, make sure you all keep up your subscriptions to Mechanical Memories Magazine, because next month I shall be revealing to you all about a very rare six-foot high electro-mechanical machine from the 1960s that I have just acquired. Be there or be square!

Robert Rowland



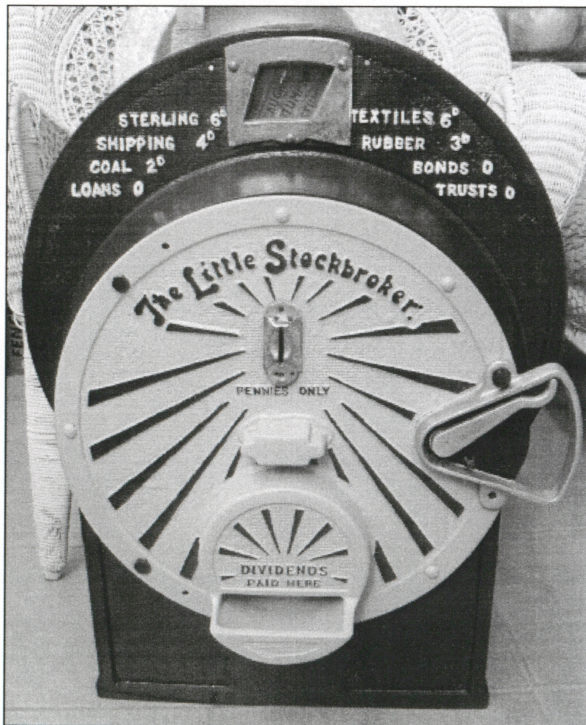
The back of the playfield, showing the four micro switches that activate the payout solenoid (which pays three pennies). A penny entering the 12 column will cascade past all four switches, thus paying twelve pennies. Simple!

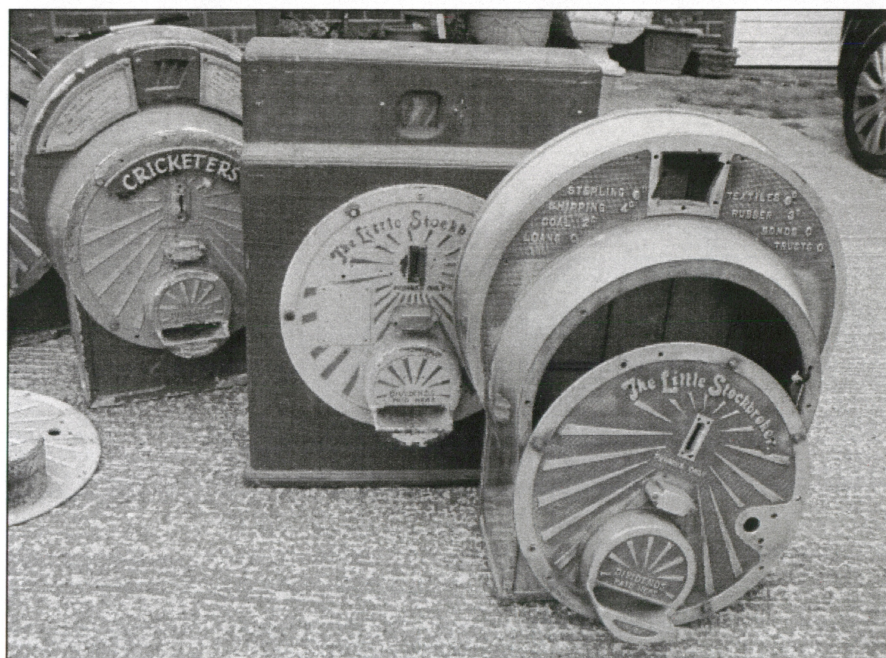
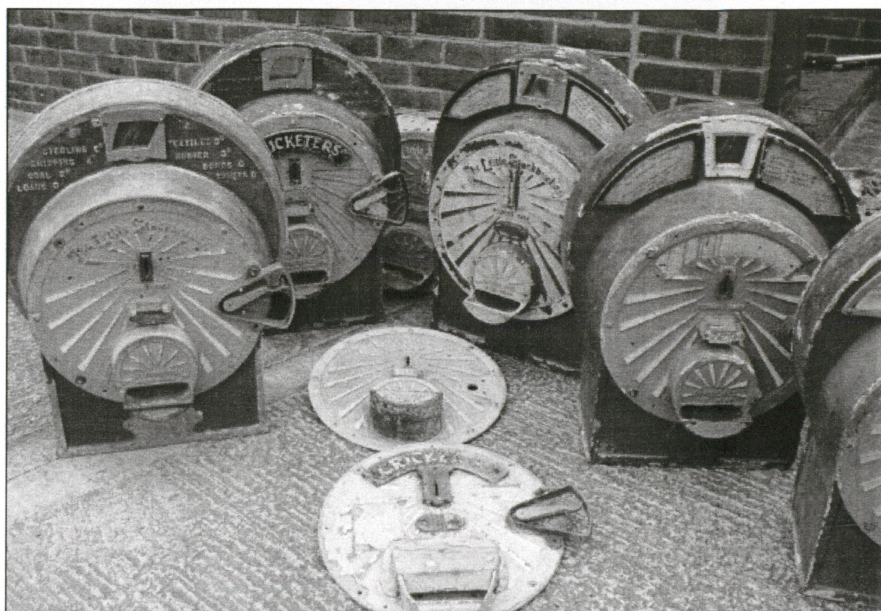
The Little Stockbroker

By Stuart Searle

Although not the most exciting amusement machine to play, they certainly cannot be knocked for their Art Deco styling. **The Little Stockbroker** was patented in 1927 by George Bradshaw and made/distributed by *Coin-Operated Machines Ltd*, Charring Cross, London.

This machine has a pre-determined payout; a strange idea, and in Bradshaw's own words, "I avoid all elements of chance whatsoever by causing every result to be pre-determined, but I still retain the necessary attraction produced by one person pitting himself against another as in such games as bridge, whist and the like." One wonders what arguments ensued when by reading the wheel the machine would only payout by inserting the next penny.





At one penny a move the coin releases the handle which moves the 'stock' wheel one position. When the handle is depressed, the wheel 'bounces' rapidly from left to right, thus giving the illusion that it is spinning. The reality is that the stock wheel's movement is predetermined. The 'Stock' appears in a window at the top of the machine. Each wheel appears to have 49 items of stock and vary between 11 and 15 that payout. The owner/operator would make between 8 to 10d on average per rotation. As can be seen from the front casting on the machine, Sterling paid the highest amount 6d (only one on the wheel), textiles 5d, shipping 4d (very few of these are on the wheel but obviously to keep you interested smaller amounts are more numerous), rubber 3d and coal pays 2d. Loans, Bonds and Trusts pay nothing.

In an effort to 'modernise', some machines were converted to 'Cricketers.' The earliest I found was between 1934 to 1936, the rest in the 1950s. The difference being the 'stock' was changed to the names of cricketers of the day (payouts) and the rest, stumped, bowled and caught being numerous non-payouts. A downside of these conversions is that some of the original cast lettering was ground off and plated over.

The pictures show the machines in as found condition, and at least one in its restored finish, as found in a cellar in Margate. They are believed to originate from the old pier. They languished in a basement for years belonging to a chap who had an arcade years ago in Dreamland and these originally belonged to his mother, who had an arcade on the pier. By the state of them, some must have been outside on a stand!

It is interesting to note that some have letters/numbers painted inside or on the back doors and the front plates painted in different colour layouts, which we think defined the owner/operator.

I have an original sales leaflet for the machine, which really helped clear up a few mystery holes and a blank plate. The plate in question, which some machines have and some don't, appears to be an instruction guide. The two holes in the casting at the base held a cast window enclosing a facsimile of the inner wheel so one could see the order of play. A strange idea, to let the player(s) know when a payout was due; I couldn't image the modern stuff today tipping off the punter. It does make you wonder how much amusement it did give, but then times were more simple. If you got fed up with it and never used them again, at least they looked good!

Stuart Searle

Coventry 2013

Nov. 24th is almost upon us, and once again we're all looking forward to the biggest slotties' event in the year. For the benefit of those who will be attending for the first time (and as a reminder to the rest), here are a few points:

Entrance is strictly by catalogue, which admits one person. However, if you're bringing a friend, there's no need to order an additional catalogue, as tickets for 'guests' will be available on the door @ £3 each.

Viewing is from 10.30 am. Please do not arrive earlier (unless you're a vendor), as you will not be admitted – the organisers and vendors must be allowed adequate time for setting up. The auction will commence at about mid day.

This is a cash only auction – no cards, cheques, promises, etc. Please also note that we will not be paying in or out until the end of the auction, so if you wish to go early, please do not bid – there will be no exceptions.

I think we've got the message across by now, but for the benefit of newbies, there is to be no buying, selling or dealing outside of the auction. We certainly do not want to see unsold auction lots flogged off in the carpark afterwards. If anyone attempts to sell you something outside of the auction, please let us know.

We have in the past allowed children, but only by prior arrangement. I don't think we've had any children in attendance over the last two or three years, and to be honest, this probably isn't the right place for potentially bored kids anyway. However, if you do need to bring children, please call me on 07710 285360. Please use your judgement, as we will not allow disruptive brats to spoil the enjoyment of others. We will certainly not be admitting very small children, babies or toddlers.

**So, we look forward to seeing you all on the 24th
This is YOUR day – don't miss it!**

Mechanical Memories Magazine
Vintage Amusements
Auction

Coundon social club, Coventry 24th November 2013

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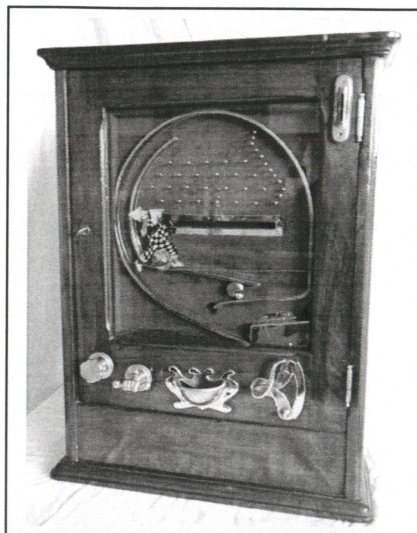
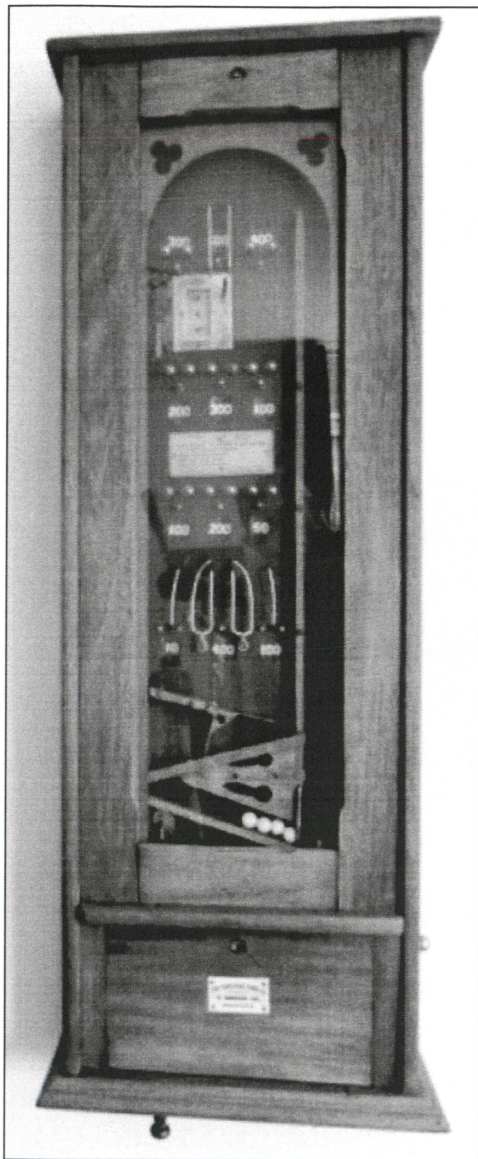
Allwins * Skill Games * Bandits
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Spares * Coins
Old advertising etc. etc.

*** * * * ***

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Lot 140, Long-case bagatelle.
 Lot 101, Rare French Clown allwin.
 Lot 42, Jennings Governor.

Coventry 2013 Preview

Once again, we have a great day lined up for you all on the 24th. We have over 260 lots, with something to suit all tastes and pockets. As usual, many thanks to our vendors, without whom these events would not be possible; it is thanks to them that the Coventry auction continues to be the biggest event of its kind in the UK.

We have a diverse selection of wall machines this year, with a particularly fine line-up of allwins, which include machines by Whales, Wonders, Parkers, BMCo, R&W etc., including some Sweetie allwins, which always seem to be popular. There are a number of older Allwin De-Lux machines, including a couple of French Reserves, which don't come up too often. Of particular interest is a rare Clown allwin, thought to be French and an equally rare early multi-cup with automatic payout.

Other wall machines include an extremely rare turn of the Century Long-case bagatelle machine, thought to be one of only about four to exist. Other rarities include an interesting 'Slick' skill game, by Samson and a Myers Tele-Test (pictured on the front cover of this issue) – I think I've only seen two of these in all the years I've been collecting. Other machines include Cromptons Beachcomber, Wonders Dropacopper, Bell Fruit Cascade, 1960s Challenger, Jamiesons Easy Push, plus a nice selection of German wall machines.



Lot 148, Oliver Whales Strike 'em.



Lot 234, Wonders Honest Joe.

Not as many Bryans machines as we've seen previously, but we do have two Elevenses allwins, Clock, Bullion and a choice of two Payramids: an early 1930s model and the later 1960s version.

There is a fine and varied selection of bandits this year, including a nice collection of Segas. Mills machines include Hi-Top, Poinsettias and Black Cherry. Jennings machines include a Galaxy, a particularly nice Governor, an early Model 'B' and a rare Superior Chief. Other machines include an early version Boland Film Stars, and the star of the line-up this year, a Pace Comet with vendors and jackpot.

There are two classic early Rock-Ola pinballs on offer this year: a Worlds Fair Jigsaw and a less common Wings. In addition, there is a very rare and interesting French pinball. There are a number of trade stimulators and vending machines, including a rather nice cast iron Royal Mail stamp vendor.

As usual, there will be a good selection of 'other stuff', including a good number of slottie books, service manuals and magazines. There is also a good selection of coins, plus the usual varied selection of bandit spares.

So once again, there's lots to look forward to. As last year, I shall be posting all the pictures supplied by vendors on the Auctions page on the MMM website:

www.mechanicalmemoriesmagazine.co.uk



Lot 44, Mills Poinsettia.



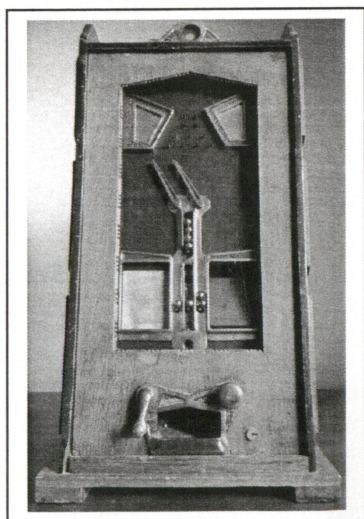
Lot 72, Sega Bonanza Star.



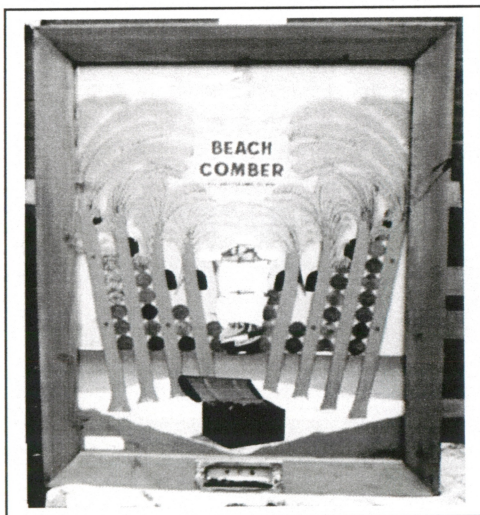
Lot 98, Parkers Carousel .



Lot 150, Jamiesons Easy Push.



Lot 230, Bryans Payramid.



Lot 235, Cromptons Beachcomber.

The Road to no Return Part III

By Angie Dobney

At last we were on the road to Great Yarmouth. It seemed a bit sad to be leaving Southend and our old house, but nothing ventured, nothing gained. Trevor came with Michael and me to Yarmouth to settle us in, and then doubled back to Southend to lead the removal guys back to us the next day. He did quite a lot of this travelling back and forth to bring our three classic cars to Yarmouth. Little did we know, due to later circumstances, that he would later be commuting every week.

I think the removal guys quite enjoyed moving us, as it was a bit different from their usual jobs, especially when we supplied them with plate-fulls of bacon sandwiches and lots of mugs of tea. There was a lot of really heavy stuff to move, and I remember we played a few jokes on them, such as asking them if they would put our Wurlitzer jukebox down in the basement (our sleeping area). The look on their faces said it all, and there were a few choice words ending in.....off! But they were generally very interested in our new venture, and believe it or not, were very happy to move us back to Essex when unfortunately we had to make that decision.

We moved in around June time, and there were already a few guests booked in for the coming weeks, so we had to quickly get all the machines in place ready for the grand opening. I remember the first couple that arrived. They were apparently regulars, and it struck us as comical that they resembled Andy Capp and his wife. Those of you of more mature years will know what I mean. They hardly said a word to us or each other all week, but when they went they remarked on the machines and asked if we collected them. Trevor was so hard pushed not to say “no, when we pick up the milk each day, we find one on the doorstep.”

We had decided that as guests were staying, we would just leave a few pennies around and they could use the machines when they wanted. That was our first mistake because unfortunately we found that especially the younger guests gave the machines such a bashing we had to start charging for the pennies to control their enthusiasm. (I am being polite here, as often families that seemed quite nice at the door, had their kids turn into monsters once they entered)! Often though, the machines did work to our advantage because generally Norfolk weather can change quickly to damp and miserable, so at least the guests could play the machines or listen to the jukebox whilst having a few drinks.

We set up a website with the help of another hotel owner, and soon found that our guests consisted of people who were genuinely interested in our machines and their era, so we became reasonably busy. Surprisingly enough, although there were a lot of other guest houses in our road, everyone was supportive of each other, so we

had a steady stream of guests during the season. Unfortunately, the season was very short and in the autumn and winter months Great Yarmouth was like a ghost town, with even the theatres shutting down.

We soon found out to our cost that some of the local kids with nothing better to do took great delight in vandalising the properties. This became quite scary, especially as to subsidise our income Trevor had to go back to Southend during the week and work on the cab, leaving Michael and me alone. Most of the local cabbies spent most of their days in the pubs or betting shops, business was so quiet.

The local council didn't help matters (as Jerry has found out in Brighton) and decided to put the parking charges up to such a silly price and make permit parking all along our road; definitely off-putting for tourists and day trippers alike. They also pedestrianised the seafront, cutting our road off to traffic, so we all lost our passing trade. Correct me if I am wrong, but wouldn't you think they would want to encourage visitors rather than turn them away?

Our dream was quickly becoming a nightmare, and so we sat down one day, took stock and decided it would be better to sell up before we became bankrupt. Many of our neighbours followed suit, and just after Easter 2007, we were heading back to Essex. It was lucky we did, as the country was heading for bad times, if you remember. We found a lovely house in Benfleet, but as it was a bit smaller we did have to get rid of some of our big stuff, such as the crane, pussy shooter, steer-a-ball and the pinballs. We figured though, that we needed to find a house that suited us, and not just to house the machines (unless of course we won the lottery and bought that fire station).

We still have some machines in the Pier Museum and Enfield, and sometimes give talks or take our existing collection to charity events.

So there you have it; we've come full circle, and if we hadn't started collecting we wouldn't have done all the things we've done. No regrets, put it down to life experience. I hope you enjoyed our tale – maybe some of you out there have similar stories, so why not put pen to paper?

Angie Dobney

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phennic converted to 1d
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hisbar.hisbar@gmail.com

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Alan 01582 536356
alannjol@virginmedia.com

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Mills Escalator to fit Bursting Cherry on
1cent/6d coin.

Chris 07909 962 186 (Berkshire)
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Pete 01493 369938 (Norfolk)

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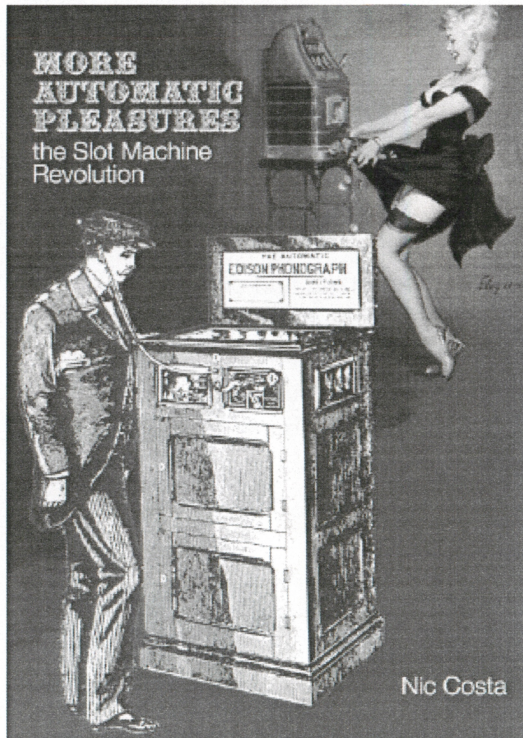
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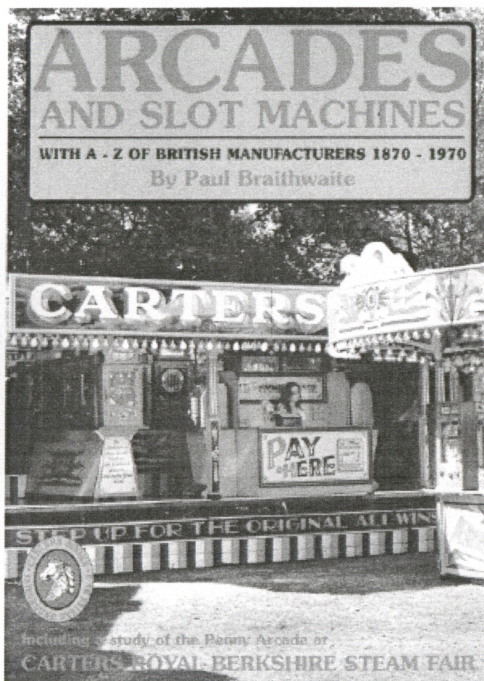
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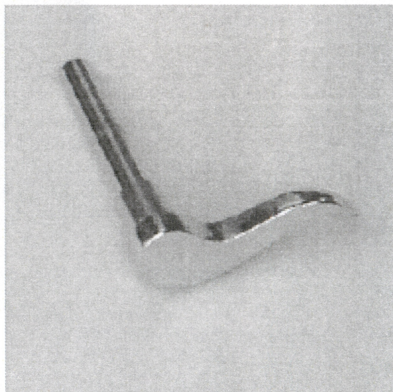
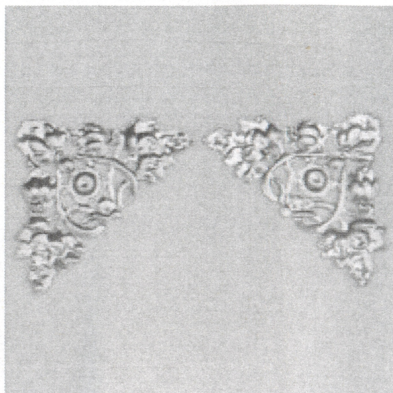
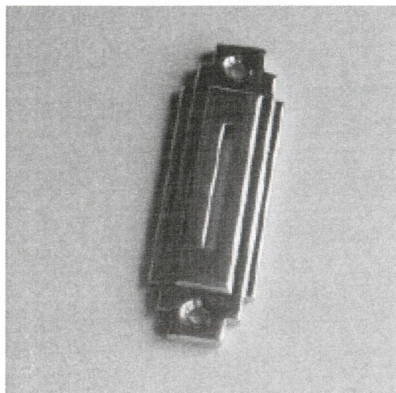
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